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ABSTRACT

This publication on the importance of further education is one in a series of booklets written specially for managers in further and higher education in the United Kingdom. The series is intended to provide up-to-date information on current issues in vocational education and training, summaries of key research studies, and perspectives on these issues. This booklet describes further education (FE) as the only part of the educational system able to respond quickly and flexibly to the skills shortages besetting industry and commerce. The FE sector is discussed as the crossroads for all kinds of educational and training routes. The following sections present and discuss recommendations to managers of colleges: (1) they should promote the strengths and virtues of their colleges to counter FE's poor image; (2) mission statements should be published to explain the roles of colleges and their services in language their clients can understand; (3) they should make their priorities clear; (4) they should reform the framework of qualifications through the National Council for Vocational Qualifications; (5) they should market their institutions' experience and expertise at delivering the kinds of vocational qualifications needed to increase FE participation; (6) colleges should restructure their offerings to attract nontraditional clientele; and (7) they should be active in the review and monitoring of the quality of goods and services the colleges produce. Ten references are listed.

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The importance of further education

T G Melling



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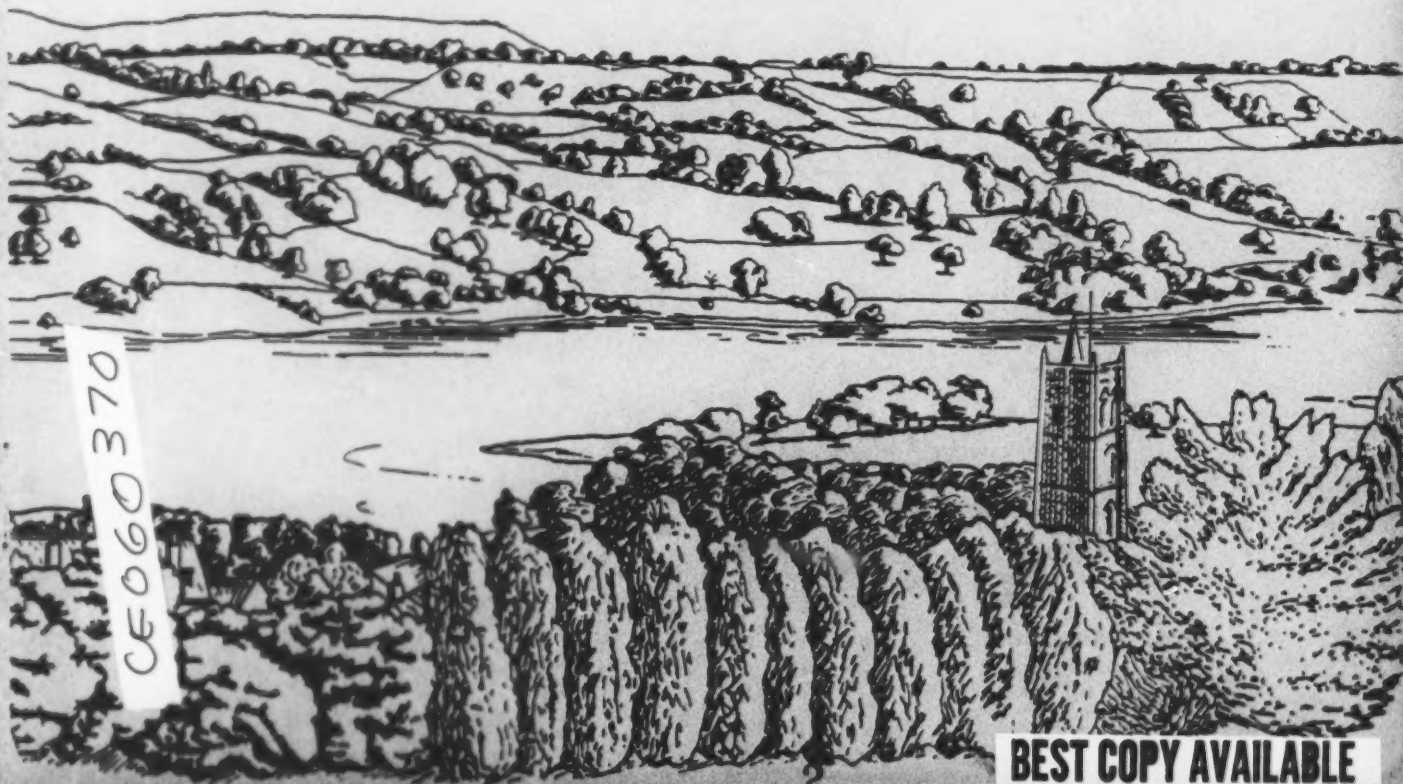
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Joined the staff of the College of Commerce in Newcastle upon Tyne (a constituent College of Newcastle Polytechnic) in 1962 and moved to Ipswich Civic College (now the Suffolk College of Higher and Further Education) in 1964. In 1972 he entered Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (Further Education) and served as an HMI first in East Anglia and then in Yorkshire and Humberside. From 1977 to 1980 he was seconded to DES as the first Director of the Further Education Unit. He returned to HM Inspectorate to become Regional Staff Inspector for Further and Higher Education in the north of England before leaving to take up the Director's post at The Staff College in 1984.

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The importance of further education

T G Melling

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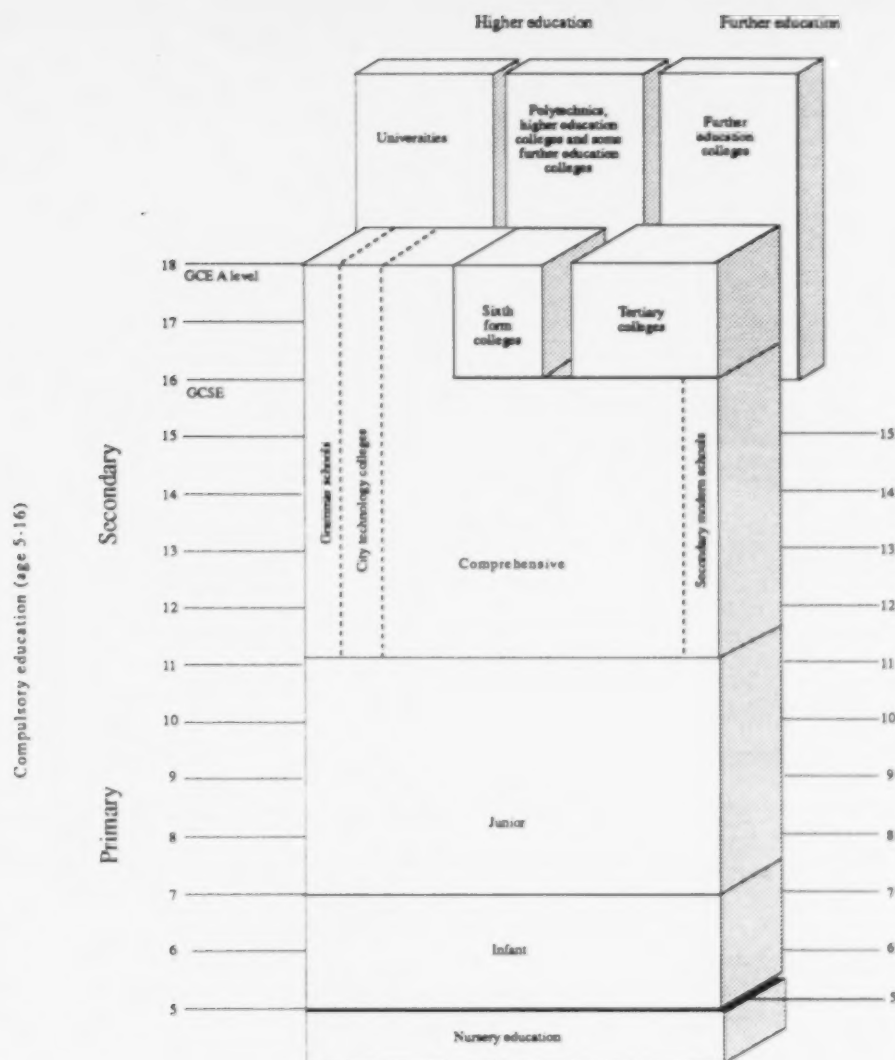
The importance of further education

Further education is the only part of the education service able to respond quickly and flexibly to the skills shortages besetting industry and commerce. It is able to increase the supply of higher education students, and to serve most people, most of the time, with programmes which appeal to their personal interests. And yet it is the least known sector of the education service, the 'Cinderella service', about which most people know little or nothing (see Figure 1).

Vocational education and training (VET) today

The FE sector is the crossroads for all kinds of educational and training routes. It includes post-school general and academic education (such as study for GCE A level) and vocational education prior to, or concurrent with, employment such as secretarial courses or apprenticeship schemes, training for work, directly for employers and indirectly via government programmes such as youth training or employment training, along with adult continuing education, for leisure and pleasure as well as for qualifications. Nationally, it is big business. In 1987 it consumed about £2bn of public expenditure, and catered for over 3m learners who attended classes, full- or part-time, in a voluntary capacity. 1.7m of these were enrolled in FE colleges, a further 1.6m in adult education centres, where their courses took place by day or in the evening for most weeks of the year. 60 per cent

Figure 1: Publicly maintained education



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of students were over the age of 19, and many of them were over 30. 64,000 full-time specialist teachers, who covered the range of expertise required in the labour market, were employed in the sector together with thousands more who worked in it part-time. Its 400 colleges and thousands of adult centres formed a comprehensive network of provision - through classes, outreach activities and community events - in all four countries of the

United Kingdom. They offered access to 1,400 useful qualifications, and organised courses without examinations in hundreds of different subjects simply because people wanted to study them. Yet, despite all this activity, further education drew little attention in the debate that year on the Education Reform Bill, either in Parliament or in the press. The ensuing Education Reform Act 1988 similarly offered no steer to further education.

Why was this so, at a time when the Government seemed obsessed with improving the nation's economic standing, by enhancing the preparation for work of young people aged 16-19, and by arranging opportunities for the education and training of adults who wanted to get into employment? Why is it that the image of further education was so poor when I claim that it is the sector which can remedy our shortages of skilled labour and entrance to HE?

These questions are partly answered by looking at the effort and money which the Government has spent since the mid-1970s in promoting predominantly work-based training alternatives to further education, in the form of the Youth Opportunities Programme and the Youth Training Scheme (for school leavers), and the Adult Training Strategy and Employment Training (for adults). In the 1981 White Paper **Training for jobs** the Government suggested that FE was not doing enough to provide the skills required in the labour market. It went on to divert part of the sector's funds out of the block grant to local authorities (LAs) and into work-related further education agreements which were struck between the Manpower Services Commission and the LAs. That the big national training programmes were not entirely successful can be gathered from the forthcoming introduction of 100 Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) which will be under the direction of local business people. The TECs are to disburse Youth Training and Employment Training monies, stimulate training in their areas, and ensure that it is relevant to local labour market needs

The image of FE

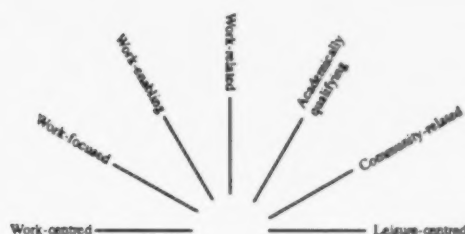
Another reason for the Government's ignoring FE is its generally low profile. This results from several features of its provision which are individually valuable but which collectively add up to something less than what marketeers call a 'unique selling proposition'. For instance:

- it has traditionally been an alternative route to educational and occupational goals. Its programmes overlap with those of schools, higher education and industrial training, and do not easily stand out as individual or distinct;
- it has been the home of the second chance and is likely to become more involved in developmental education as non-traditional students are recruited to make good the effects of the 'demographic trough'. Unfortunately, second chance is too often taken to mean second best;
- its vocational focus is so comprehensive as to appear incoherent in the minds of many actual and potential clients;
- it has no natural place on the well known educational ladder linking primary with post-graduate provision. The opportunity of establishing such a position through the creation of tertiary colleges has been seized only infrequently; and
- it is subject to funding and control from a variety of sources, which makes for difficulty in setting overall objectives for the service and to plan what should be available and where.

There is no central lobby for the service; colleges do not attract the support in Parliament or local councils that schools and universities do; and even the 'trade press' gives the sector only a few column inches each week. The institutions lack a clear national image.

A major role of our new governors will be to help present the strengths and virtues of their colleges, in conjunction with the local authorities whose remit is to serve the community from which (at all ability levels) our students are drawn. FE is a meeting place from which routes lead to a variety of important destinations and we rely upon governors and authorities to keep the roads open. It would be unfortunate for the less vocal and less influential members of our society if the move towards autonomous financial management led colleges to drop provision for some parts of the population in favour of attracting high-earning programmes from agencies who are prepared to pay. A co-ordinated approach across an authority is more likely to serve the greatest number of people for most of their known needs. I believe that governors and their institutions are in the business of developing competence and confidence in all post-school citizens who wish to benefit from their services, so I am strongly in favour of both authorities and colleges publishing what the Americans call

Figure 2: Spectrum of provision in further education



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'mission statements'. Such statements explain the roles of colleges and their services in language which their clients can understand. **Figure 2** illustrates the range of provision from which a college's mission statement, and its courses, might be drawn, taken from the work-related further education development plan of the London Borough of Newham. Of course, authorities and governors have to argue the priorities they wish to pursue from within such a spectrum of activities but one might expect them to ensure that their colleges, taken as a whole, leave no part of it untouched.

Direction in FE

It is vital that authorities and governors make their priorities clear, because the Education Reform Act has offered them little direction and no national agenda. National leadership on the schools side has been supplied by the National Curriculum and age-related tests. In higher education two new councils (UFC and PCFC) have been created to steer the service. But for further education there is a central vacuum. The reform of FE governing bodies and the introduction of formula funding for colleges mirror the legal provisions for schools in an attempt to make institutions more businesslike and responsive to local industry and commerce. The recent introduction of Training and Enterprise Councils by the Department of Employment again puts local labour market demands as the first priority.

But can all the objectives of further education be defined locally? Are there not national purposes and targets which the sector should fulfil? And are not some of these aims related to our position in Europe after 1992 and in the world more generally?

As it happens, we are not being left to find the light ourselves because a national consensus is emerging on post-16 education which does illuminate a path for governors and their colleges. In brief, it is that:

- the UK must increase the participation of its people in continuing education and training;
- the country must deliver more vocational qualifications and degrees;
- the general level of qualifications must be higher than heretofore; and
- the education and training services must be made more attractive to their customers in order to achieve the other three objectives.

There is now great concern about economic competition from overseas, particularly from Germany and Japan but also from the Pacific Rim, which has led to a series of reports about the inadequacy of our skills base, the deficiencies of our management, and the lack of higher education among our professional workers. At the skills level, survey after survey shows that manufacturing firms expect shortages of skilled labour to act as a constraint on their output. Other shortages affect the public sector - notably in nursing and care. Further education has a hand in the supply of most of these skilled personnel. However, the true measure of our skills shortages lies in comparing the competence of our work force with that of competitor nations, not least those who are gearing up fast to face the challenges of the future. The number of people qualifying each year in Britain as mechanical fitters, electricians and building craftsmen, for example, are only between a half and a third of the corresponding numbers in Germany. In addition, we do not pay the same kind of attention to training supervisors as German and Japanese companies do. We have lower productivity, and often lower quality, among our clerical staff, many of whom have modest educational achievements and little vocational preparation. We have also had persistent high unemployment among young people which is linked with poor school qualifications and little or no training. (A recent report on literacy and

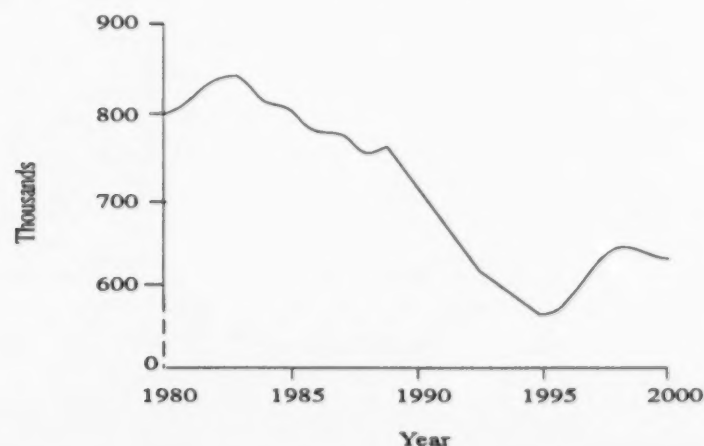
numeracy in the Youth Training Scheme showed that over a quarter of trainees in YTS needed help with numeracy and 17 per cent with literacy - and unfortunately the kinds of jobs which young people with such low attainments occupied in the past are decreasing quickly in number.) At higher levels, we have shortages of teachers who are appropriately qualified to teach mathematics, physics, business studies and technology - and the situation is not improving. Finally, our managers are less highly qualified than those of competitor countries. 24 per cent of our top managers have degrees; 62 per cent of Germany's; 65 per cent of France's; and 85 per cent of those in Japan and the USA. We don't even encourage our ablest young people to go into management after graduation, and we know (again from recent surveys) that the development of British managers - once they are appointed - is generally neglected. Most of these faults cannot be laid at the door of the education system, but unless we transform the supply side of vocational education and training we are not likely to increase the quality of the British work force, and this will affect still further the nation's competitive edge and the possibility of economic expansion.

In addition, as is now well known, we are in the middle of a demographic downturn in the number of young people who reaching an age when they might enter the labour market. Between 1987 and 1995 the number of 16-19s in Great Britain is projected to fall by over 850,000 - a reduction of nearly a quarter (see Figure 3). With school leavers at a premium, young people might be

tempted to enter the labour market for quick financial gain without considering whether they should stay on in education or whether their employers will help them to continue their education and training in work. This would only compound the inadequacies of the present situation. However, despite the demographic downturn, the total number of people in work is expected to grow continuously between now and the year 2000. The Department of Employment forecasts an increase during this period of just over 1m in the civilian labour force in Britain (from 27.6m to 28.6m). The projection assumes that unemployment will remain at 1.9m - but if unemployment dropped, the numbers of those in work would grow even more. All but a small proportion of the increase is accounted for by women. Many of them will be returning to work after bringing up families, and their level of training is likely to be low or their skills out of date. 29 per cent of people of working age at present have no qualification whatsoever, so there is a lot to be done with the current and expanding work force.

What is now concentrating our minds - on top of the chronic under-supply of skilled personnel and the immediate shortage of young people entering the labour market - is the imminent invasion of UK markets by European firms which enjoy a competitive advantage through more efficient production. The country's position *vis-a-vis* our strongest competitors has been described by David Finegold and David Soskice in their examination of **The failure of training in Britain: analysis and prescription** (1986), as a low-skill equilibrium in

Figure 3: Eighteen year old population in England & Wales



which poor quality goods and services are produced in poorly managed, relatively low technology organisations with a poorly skilled labour force. The lack of skilled labour inhibits investment in newer, higher technology - which, in turn, inhibits the demand for skilled people. To close the vicious circle, the absence of employment prospects inhibits the demand from individuals for the provision of more and higher level vocational education and training. Finegold and Soskice point to foreign and multi-national companies in the UK as the exceptions which prove this rule. They compare us unfavourably with Germany and Japan which are in a high-skill equilibrium where the provision of VET, and people's motivation to participate in it, are reinforced by labour market pressures.

The essence of the single European market which is due to be completed at the end of 1992 is the removal of barriers to the movement of people, goods, services and capital within the European Community. The equalising of standards among the 12 nations will be achieved either by 'harmonisation', which determines that EC rules will replace the standards of the various states, or by 'mutual recognition', which means that if a product, service or qualification meets the legislative requirements of one member state then it is acceptable across the EC as a whole. Thus barriers to the movement of people will be removed by:

- the mutual recognition of academic diplomas and vocational training qualifications;
- the eventual introduction of a European Vocational Training Pass, recording the attainment of approved standards;
- the free exchange of students with nationally recognised qualifications between member states; and
- the right of professionally qualified people to practice anywhere in the EC.

As several European states educate and train their people to higher levels than does the UK there could be increasing competition for employment in this country from well qualified Europeans (who, in general, have much better command of English than we do of their languages). On the other hand, there will be vocational opportunities for our nationals in the rest of Europe, if our colleges can ensure that students get qualified and acquire some

competence in relevant foreign languages. (The European Commission has introduced the LINGUA programme to fund teaching of Community languages.) Other activities which colleges can undertake to meet the requirements of 1992 are to offer short courses in EC languages, to provide information and consultancy on the various European directives which affect local industry, to establish links with sister organisations in Europe which can offer vocational and training experience to our students in exchange for similar facilities in the UK, to insert some general education about Europe into British courses, and even to recruit students from other parts of the Community. An early step which governors and managers can take is to conduct an enquiry among, or audit of, their staff to establish who has the language skills, the knowledge of European countries, and the contacts with European organisations which will be of value to their colleges in the run-up to 1992.

Reform of qualifications

So a consensus is emerging that we must do something, and quickly. We have already begun to reform the framework of qualifications through the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ), which is concerned with setting and testing competence in the work place at a number of levels. Vocational qualifications in future must be based on demonstrated competence in employment, rather than on success in courses and examinations in school or college. The Government hopes that people will be encouraged to give evidence of their abilities at work rather than be discouraged at having to return to periods of extended study. If we can devise methods of accrediting the learning our workers already have, we should be able to identify those areas where they need to improve their performance, and thus provide a more targeted service of VET for employers and individuals. People should also be helped by two other features of the NCVQ approach. In future they will be assessed on 'units of competence', which means that they will be credited for chunks of achievement. These credits can be entered on a National Record of Vocational Achievement (NROVA), and a number of credits - at, say, Level I - will add up to a National Vocational Qualification at that level. By arranging qualifications in a national framework the National Council hopes to reduce overlap and competition among them, and

facilitate progression up the ladder and between occupations.

The NCVQ's guide to levels is as follows:

- Level I represents competence in the performance of work activities which are mainly routine and predictable, or which provide a broad basis for progression;
- Level II represents competence in a broader and more demanding range of work activities which involve greater individual responsibility and autonomy than those at Level I;
- Level III represents competence in skilled areas which involve performance in a broad range of work activities, including many that are complex and non-routine. In some areas, supervisory competence may be a requirement at this level;
- Level IV represents competence in the performance of complex, technical, specialised and professional work activities, including those which involve design, planning and problem-solving, with a significant degree of personal accountability. In many areas competence in supervision or management will be a requirement at this level.

It is expected that direct comparability between standards will be achieved among similar or adjacent occupational fields. This could even be so for qualifications above Level IV. The Department of Employment has asked the Council to proceed above Level IV in those sectors where all the significant professional bodies are willing to be involved on a voluntary basis.

Comparison across the entire spectrum of occupational fields will be less exact, but it is expected that the titles and levels of awards will indicate general levels of attainment which will become universally understood.

The establishment of the NCVQ framework (which simplifies the numerous qualifications on offer at present) should help us to market UK qualifications within the EC - and the unit credit system should facilitate transfer of qualifications within the Community. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)

in Berlin is carrying out technical comparisons among European qualifications - though, ironically, the five levels of qualification which it uses in its research map only roughly on to the NCVQ framework.

However, we ought to remember that NCVQ has not been established to promote colleges. Indeed, it is trying to remain neutral between FE and other types of vocational education and training - including open learning. Its object is the outcomes rather than the processes of delivery. It is really concerned with testing, not with curriculum; and it is committed to testing to employment-led standards. This has led to an amount of controversy over whether simulated work counts for assessment purposes or whether testing should take place in the factory, on the shop floor and in offices. Not all colleges are happy with the change: they have paid a great deal of attention in the last few years to developing new courses for people who had turned off education and its examination structures, and they now see the system reverting from showing interest in the learning process to being dominated by assessment practices. Lying behind NCVQ are Industry Lead Bodies which set the standards for their sectors and nominate the 'competences' which jobs require. There is some fear that 'competences' are all too easily narrowed and limited to individual skills - and that those skills are themselves too frequently based on analyses of what has been, let alone what is. Most educators are happier with the more general term 'competence' because it refers to all-round performance in the real world, which integrates understanding, knowledge and skill. Fortunately for them, their concern has been reflected by three heavyweights in the system - the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress and the Secretary of State for Education and Science. In the report of its Task Force, **Towards a skills revolution** (CBI, 1989), the Confederation indicates dissatisfaction with the potential narrowing of vocational qualifications and comments "NCVQ needs to make consistent progress in promoting broad based competence". To make good the deficiency it advocates a list of 'common learning outcomes' to pervade all qualifications. These include effective communication, applications of numeracy, understanding the world of work, problem-solving and positive attitudes to change. In a parallel document, **Skills 2000** (TUC, 1989), the Congress states "To ensure that these qualifications are relevant without being narrowly job-specific, the NCVQ must ensure that awards involve

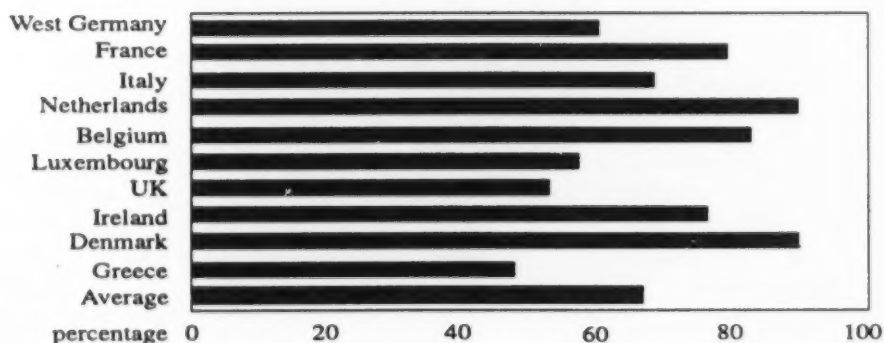
educationally based skills - abilities to reason, analyse and apply knowledge in standard and changing situations". The Secretary of State has shown a similar concern with breadth in programmes designed for young people 16-19. He wrote at the end of 1989 to the National Curriculum Council and the School Examinations and Assessment Council asking them to look at the 'core skills' which young people need in adult and working life. The primary context is GCE A level but he has asked the Councils to consider the implications of his request for students enrolled on other (i.e. vocational) courses. With these supports FE now has the opportunity to make a bridge between competence-based vocational qualifications and general education. Governors and managers of colleges should be concerned to see that their staff create learning situations in which core skills and personal effectiveness are developed as well as vocational or academic capabilities - in other words, that they run education, not merely training, organisations.

Increasing participation

On the numbers front we compare badly with our economic rivals, as a glance at our post-16 staying-on rates demonstrates (Figure 4). The rates of many other industrialised countries - and the attainment of their people - are higher than ours. (We should also be very concerned with the targets set by rapidly developing nations such as Korea, which is endeavouring to keep all its young people

in education until they are 18, as do the Japanese.) However, on the positive side, we are stirring ourselves and have now set targets for achievement in vocational education and training for the UK. After the publication of the CBI report and the TUC's *Skills 2000*, the Secretary of State for Employment has published a number of ambitious targets for the nation to achieve over the next few years (Figure 5). This is the first time in my experience that the sector has had precise goals, and they help to fill that vacuum in leadership referred to earlier. It behoves governors and managers to get behind the targets and parade their institutions' experience and expertise at delivering the kinds of vocational qualifications which are needed. Without the assistance of the further education sector there is no hope that, by the end of 1992, two-thirds of our young people can achieve NVQ II (or a clutch of GCSEs) and a quarter of them reach NVQ III (or two A levels). The targets for 1995 and the year 2000 stretch the imagination even more, so authorities and colleges should be making plans, and publishing them, for reaching the numbers in their area.

The CBI's *Towards a skills revolution* (in which the targets were originally proposed) acknowledges that without positive action by industry and the Government to support the new approach to training we still face the possibility of 16 year olds entering jobs either without initial vocational preparation or without ongoing release to vocational education and training. It has therefore proposed a 'careership' for all young people from the age of 14 whereby



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Figure 5: Secretary of State for Employment national targets (set 1989)

By the end of 1992

NVQ system in place, including Scotland
Equivalences between academic and vocational qualifications
No young person in job without training
Two-thirds young people achieving NVQ II (or equivalent)
Quarter young people reaching NVQ III
All employees in ongoing training/education

By the end of 1995

All 18 year olds to have NVQ II
At least half young people progressing to NVQ III
At least half employed work force aiming for updated qualifications

By the year 2000

At least half employed workforce achieving NVQ III

everyone should have a personal profile which records achievements and includes an action plan of development needs. This should facilitate the creation of individual learning programmes. Of course, a profile of this kind requires national criteria for school records of achievement and the alignment of those records with the NROVA which has been introduced by NCVQ. The profile should continue post-16 into FE, training and employment. Another aspect of the careership would be the provision of guidance to people as they progress through courses, training and work. A third proposal is to give each 16 year old a 'cash credit' which can be spent on courses leading to recognised qualifications up to NVQ III or its equivalent.

That we can serve the economy with confidence - despite previous doubts in some quarters - has been proved by a report published recently by the Training Agency - **Training in Britain - a survey of funding, activities and attitudes** (Training Agency 1989). This 100-page document and its separate appendices show that colleges already undertake half the off-

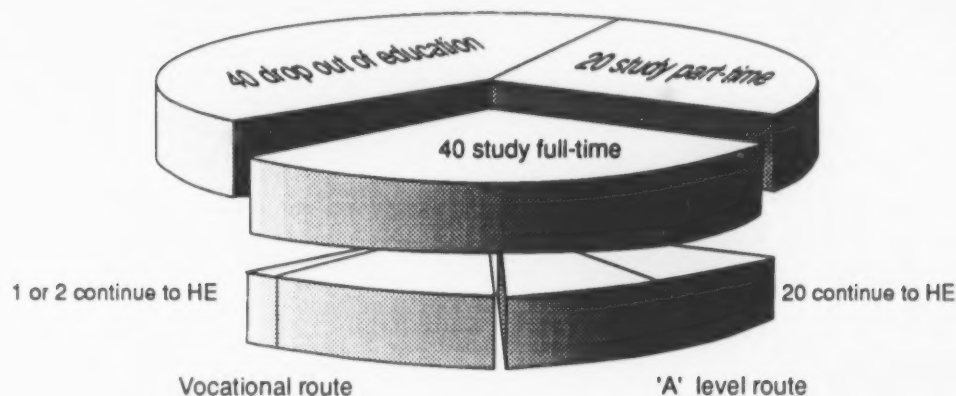
the-job training which goes on outside employers' premises, and that they are noted as sources of good quality provision. It is reported that the LEA-controlled sector gives best value for money as well as being the major segment of local training markets. Colleges must now persuade employers and individuals that they can offer what is wanted in packages of time and content which are acceptable to them. This will demand a major marketing effort by authorities and institutions to bridge the gap which exists between them and those who do not at present participate in VET. Much of this effort will have to be expended locally - but there is a role for a central marketing unit to give the sector the presence it lacks at national level.

It would, however, be short-sighted to accept the economic function of FE as the only purpose worth pursuing. Three other important reports have been published recently:

- British Petroleum's **Increasing participation in higher education** (BP, 1989);
- the Royal Society of Arts' **More means different: widening access to higher education. Final report** (Ball, 1989);
- the Institute of Manpower Studies' **How many graduates in the 21st century? The choice is yours** (Pearson *et al*, 1989).

All agree with the Department of Education and Science's aim to double student numbers in higher education over the next 25 years. They also come to a common conclusion. As the significant drop-out rate in British education occurs from schools when pupils are 16 (Figure 6), the FE sector must be encouraged to supply the undergraduates of the future by furthering not only the education of more 16-19s but also of more adults who wish to return to study. The BP development programme, "Aiming at a college education", which has followed its report with the same title, deliberately blurs the distinctions between further and higher education in the word 'college', thus treating the post-compulsory sector as a unity. We have chosen in Britain to divide HE more distinctively from FE after the Education Reform Act 1988. Nonetheless, no matter what the barriers, it is incumbent upon governors and authorities to ensure that links remain between colleges at different levels in order to facilitate progression to higher level study.

Figure 6: Post-school progress of 100 British 16 year olds



brokerage between the client and what is on offer.

Structural change

If we are to succeed in increasing participation rates and raising the level of qualifications, our colleges will have to restructure their offerings to attract the non-traditional clientele. That almost certainly means that they must divide long courses into modules, allow people to study a few modules at a time in periods of the week which are convenient to them, and offer credits for attainment at the end of each unit of study. Equally as necessary will be a shift to client-centred learning, in which colleges will tailor their provision to different groups, and even to individuals, by using a combination of tutorial methods, resource centres and open learning to reinforce classroom approaches. Some of the tuition and assessment will have to take place in firms' premises. Institutions at the leading edge are already heavily involved in educational guidance (before, during and at the end of programmes), teaching in class, supported study off-site, advice on (and help with) child care and financial aid, the assessment of prior learning as well as current attainment, careers advice, and job placement. Only further education has the resources and expertise to deliver such a package of learning opportunities which can be matched to individual needs. Governors should be concerned to see that their colleges do offer these services, and that they are managed in such a way that they provide an adequate

Quality

Finally I would like to address the issue of quality assurance and control. Quality is a major selling point in a period of rising expectations among consumers, and I would expect governors to be actively interested (together with the LEA) in the methods which are used in their colleges to assure and monitor the quality of the goods and services they produce. Institutions in the future will have to devise procedures of review which surpass the simple collection of statistics of student retention and success. The information which is gathered must lead to action when content and learning methods are found to be unsuitable. Many colleges are looking to industrial and commercial practice by seeking the 'Kite mark' of British Standard 5750, which validates the fact that they have systems and procedures to guarantee quality of delivery. Others are investigating schemes of total quality management. Quality is an area where governors in particular can show interest and be of practical help. Of course, in 'people industries' such as education, health and care, standards of delivery depend on the capability of the workers and on the relationship between them and their clients. In my view customer satisfaction surveys are a necessary part of the future of FE, as are target setting and annual review for managers and teachers alike.

Conclusion

The role of our new governors is more than to keep the books straight and to make a surplus on the annual accounts. Strategy for further education involves more than a simple business plan. For a model we could do worse than to look further than Europe - to California, known for its enterprise and entrepreneurship, and for being the home of much of the world's micro-technology research. The California Master Plan for post-secondary education, which covers public and private universities and colleges, was published around the same time as our own great Education Reform Bill - but it goes much further in its provisions. It was entitled, significantly, **The challenge of change: a reassessment of the California Community Colleges** (1986) with the more important social concepts preceding the economic one. At the heart of the Master Plan is "the ability of qualified students to advance from lower-division instruction in a community college to upper-division instruction in a four-year institution" (i.e. the idea of pushing students on to higher-level qualifications). About the community colleges - the American equivalent of our further education - the Master Plan says "The success of the whole system depends on them. Their governing structure must be strengthened substantially and held accountable for the successful operation of the colleges as full partners in the post-secondary education enterprise". Our governors here should accept no less a brief.

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